

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

281356Z Jul 05

UNCLAS CARACAS 002277

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [KPAO](#) [PGOV](#) [VE](#)

SUBJECT: MEDIA PLAY- TELESUR DEBUT AND U.S.
CONGRESSIONAL RESPONSE

SUMMARY

1. Telesur, the regional TV channel backed primarily by the Venezuelan government, debuted July 24. Recent comments made by officialist press reflect disappointment in the United States for what they consider another attempt to hinder efforts towards regional integration. They further claim the U.S. response to the launch of the station demonstrates the American government fears a rise in national-patriotic tendencies in South America. However, the opposition press is concerned that Telesur will hinder the spread of democratic ideals, and welcome the United States' efforts to monitor the dissemination of Telesur programming. Some opposition journalists have already expressed doubts about the success of Telesur because of a perceived lack of organization and the predictable repeating of the same populist rhetoric. END SUMMARY.

ARTICLES

Political analyst Manuel Felipe Sierra commented in leading liberal daily EL NACIONAL circ. 120,000 (07/26): "Telesur does not bet on integration. It is rather a window to sell the advantages of the unprecedented process of democratic deformation that has been taking place in Venezuela. Even though it was premature, the US Congress passed an amendment to counteract Telesur signal. At a first glance, this measure generates patriotic feelings and it is an obvious meddling into the life of the country. But why are Cuba and Venezuela the only countries affected by this extreme measure? Why not any other Latin American nation? Telesur will be a tool to strengthen the anti-imperialist messages, the Castro-Chvez propaganda."

Sensationalist daily 2001 circ. 90,000 (07/27) editorialized: "Telesur is not an instrument for integration; it is rather a means of exporting the Bolivarian revolution. The first Sunday broadcast did not make any impact at all. With Tiro Fijo as an interviewee and the anti-imperialist message as a slogan, there are a number of reasons to say that the Channel started off with the wrong foot because it doesn't respond to the feeling of most of the people."

Journalist Marianella Salazar commented in leading liberal daily EL NACIONAL (07/27): "The first broadcasts of Telesur reminded me of the sixties. Yesterday, Telesur broadcast a documentary on Fidel Castro and Che Guevara. Castro and Che are two complementary models of Marxist-Leninist terrorism. Che's message has been 'hatred as a factor of fight' Will that be the message and the model that will be heard by the audiences of the South American countries? The revolution is now on the air, that's why Che and the sixties are back in fashion: utopias, fanaticism, the new wave, 'the new man', socialism, popular songs, comrades, marihuana, revolutionary order against the bourgeois order."

Columnist under the pseudonym of Marciano (reportedly the Venezuelan vice president Jos Vicente Rangel) wrote in pro-Government daily tabloid DIARIO VEA circ.25,000(07/27): "The proposal of the Republican right in the House of Representatives proposed by legislator Connie Mack illustrates the current policy of the mafia that runs the US. It is, in fact, the application of a policy similar to that applied against Cuba, which is a complete failure. It is stupid to think that the US administration will be successful by repeating in Venezuela the frustrated experience of 'Radio Mart.' What good things can the Bush administration disseminate about the American democracy when Venezuelans know very

well the stark reality that nation lives: poverty and social inequality, a precarious electoral system and the

genocide action against other peoples like in the case of the invasion of Iraq? Stupid gringos, don't you learn from history!"

Columnist Clodovaldo Hernandez wrote in conservative EL UNIVERSAL circ. 120,000 (07/22): "The United States intends to bombard Venezuela but not with napalm, like in Vietnam, or with bombs, like in Afghanistan or Iraq but with objective news. The attack will be preemptive and seeks to counter the hemispheric brainwashing the Venezuelan `regime' plans to do through Telesur, a weapon of mass destruction more lethal than those Saddam Hussein had hidden in his palaces - according to gringos' objective news."

A column by Journalist and radio and TV host Roberto Giusti in EL UNIVERSAL(07/23), read: "The decision of the US House of Representatives is a mistake because Venezuela is still far away from being Cuba, where there is a sole media owner, a single message and one way of addressing the news. In our country there are still media outlets and journalists willing to counteract, and in fact they do, the twisted or biased information that comes from the government-run communication platform. In Venezuela, the freedom of information and the right of the citizens to be informed is fully guaranteed thanks to those media and journalists, despite the governmental actions, harassment, and the laws that aim at reducing the spaces of the freedom of speech. In conclusion, we don't need a version of radio Mart in Venezuela." Political Analyst Columnist Alberto Garrido wrote in conservative daily EL UNIVERSAL (07/22): "The decision of the US House of Representatives to 'counteract the anti-American sentiment' of the newly-born Telesur is, technically, in the framework of the concept of fourth-generation war. One of the most important elements of the fourth-generation wars is the use of the media to win the psychological war. The war of information between the United States and Venezuela seems to announce the beginning of the end of a stage, marked by the priority of the oil business, and the beginning of another one, where the voice that will be heard the most will be that of the Pentagon."

Journalist Earle Herrera commented in liberal El MUNDO circ. 45,000 (07/25): "Gringos have a wrong concept of the Venezuelan opposition members: they consider them to be stupid. Now the House of Representatives passed an amendment in order to protect local opposition members' minds. Rarely has a group been insulted so much under the pretext of protecting it from a bad influence. Republican senator from Florida (from where else?), Connie Mack, made a speech that would have cracked senator Mac Carthy up, and succeeded in having the House of Representatives pass the referred amendment Gringos underestimate not only the opposition but also their own media outlets, which is outrageous."

An editorial in pro-government daily tabloid DIARO VEA circ. 25,000 (07/25): "Venezuelans already know that the U.S. Senate passed a decision to bombard Venezuela with TV programs. . The Bush administration's decision implies a new intervention against Venezuela and also against the countries that made the sovereign decision to join the Telesur project. The imperialist circles show their desperation as the national-patriotic tendencies in South America increase."

Journalist and Venezuelan Ambassador to Mexico wrote in leading opposition EL NACIONAL (07/26): "Telesur already frightened US most conservative sectors. The American decision to invade the Venezuelan radio-electric spectrum with clearly destabilizing media garbage indicates that the Bolivarian government's permanent warning of the Bush administration's imminent direct aggressions and interventionist attitude was true. It seems to be that

the Bush administration got tired of acting through intermediaries and now wants to repeat in Venezuela the fiasco of TV Mart. For the gringos it is unacceptable that Latin Americans have an option to CNN."

Another column in EL NACIONAL by political analyst Alberto Barrera (07/24) read: "The reaction of the US House of Representatives on Telesur seems to foster this plan instead of counteracting it. Before going on the air, Telesur has already turned into a power. By wanting to attack it, they strengthen it. Everything backfires for the US. After all these years, they still don't know who we are, what happens to us. The Bush administration's policies are a bunch of wrong moves, arrogance and sheer ignorance: in fact, they still don't know what world they live in."

BROWNFIELD

NNNN

2005CARACA02277 - UNCLASSIFIED